

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding final Office Action mailed September 8, 2006. The Examiner is thanked for the thorough examination of the present application. Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 8-14 and 28-35 are pending in the present application.

Claims 8-14 and 31-35 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent Application No. 10/850,940.

Claims 31-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Sijstermans* (U.S. Patent No. 6,438,676).

Claims 8-10 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Sijstermans* in view of *Mahurin* (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,244). Claims 11, 13, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Sijstermans* in view of *Mahurin* and further in view of *Lumelsky* (U.S. Patent No. 5,430,464). Finally, claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Sijstermans* in view of *Mahurin* and further in view of *Morein et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,636,226).

Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 36 and 37 are allowable. Applicants have canceled claims 8-14 and 28-35 and have added new claims 38-50 which depend on independent claim 36, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. It should not be presumed that Applicants agree with any statements made by the Examiner in the Office Action unless otherwise indicated by the Applicants. Applicants respectfully request consideration of the following amendments and remarks

contained herein. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejections – Double Patenting

Claims 8-14 and 31-35 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/850,940. For at least the reason that claims 8-14 and 31-35 have been canceled, Applicants submit that the double patenting rejection of these claims has been rendered moot.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 31-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly being anticipated by *Sijstermans* (U.S. Patent No. 6,438,676). For at least the reason that claims 31-35 have been canceled, Applicants submit that the §102(b) rejection of these claims has been rendered moot.

III. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

For at least the reason that claims 8-14, and 28-30 have been canceled, Applicants submit that the §103(a) rejection of these claims has been rendered moot.

IV. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's statement in the instant Office Action in which claims 36 and 37 have been indicated as allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this amendment and response to Office Action. If, however, any fee is believed to be due, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,



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